

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 02572 01 OF 02 031710Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICAE-00
SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 DOE-15 SOE-02 OC-06 CCO-00
PER-01 OPR-02 OES-07 AID-05 PC-01 EB-08 COME-00
AGRE-00 DOEE-00 /107 W
-----087061 031910Z /72

O R 031609Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2956
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ACCRA 2572

LONDON FOR SEITZ

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH
SUBJ: REFERENDUM RESULTS DISPUTED, STRIKES LIKELY

REF: ACCRA 2538

1. SUMMARY: RESULTS OF MARCH 30 REFERENDUM ON UNION GOVERNMENT ARE STILL CONFUSED AND DISPUTED AS OF AFTERNOON APRIL 3. ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER REMAINS IN HIDING AND HAS BEEN REPLACED BY ASSISTANT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER QUAYE. PROFESSIONALS ARE DEMANDING THAT HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG RESIGN AND HAND OVER POWER TO A CARETAKER COUNCIL OF STATE HEADED BY CHIEF JUSTICE APALOO. PROFESSIONALS SAY THEY WILL GO ON STRIKE IMMEDIATELY; IF THEY DO, SHORTAGES OF ELECTRICITY, WATER, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND MEDICAL SERVICES ARE
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PAGE 02 ACCRA 02572 01 OF 02 031710Z

LIKELY. END SUMMARY.

2. AS OF MID-AFTERNOON, APRIL 3, THERE HAD BEEN NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ON RESULTS OF REFERENDUM ON UNION GOVERNMENT. GOG-CONTROLLED DAILY GRAPHIC ON APRIL 3 CARRIED ALLEGED RESULTS FROM ALL BUT TWO OF COUNTRY'S 140 CONSTITUENCIES. OF TOTAL OF

1,996,447 VOTES SAID TO HAVE BEEN CAST, 54 PER CENT (1,080,632) ARE CLAIMED TO BE "YES" VOTES IN FAVOR OF UNION GOVERNMENT, VS. 46 PER CENT (915,823) "NO" VOTES AGAINST THIS CONCEPT AND PRESUMABLY IN FAVOR OF A RETURN TO PARTY POLITICS. (TWO MISSING CONSTITUENCIES ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT. RESULTS HAVE BEEN CARRIED ON RADIO AND WILL AFFECT THESE TOTALS ONLY marginally.)

3. IN CONTRAST, OPPOSITION GROUP (PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE, OR PMFJ) IS CIRCULATING ITS OWN VERSION OF RESULTS, IN WHICH IT ASSERTS THAT OF 2,999,964 VOTES CAST, ONLY 47 PER CENT (1,399,330) WERE "YES" AND 53 PER CENT (1,600,294) WERE "NO". PMFJ IS THEREFORE CLAIMING THAT UNION GOVERNMENT WAS ACTUALLY DEFEATED IN REFERENDUM. PMFJ SUPPORTERS ASSERT THAT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER JUSTICE I. K. ABBAN, WHO IS STILL IN HIDING, HAS GIVEN HIS APPROVAL TO THESE DISSIDENT FIGURES. THEY CHARGE THAT GOG HAS RIGGED REFERENDUM BY MISCOUNTING BALLOTS. (GOG SUPPORTERS RETORT THAT PMFJ WAS ITSELF TRYING HARD TO RIG ELECTION BUT THAT UNION GOVERNMENT WON NEVERTHELESS.)

4. DETAILS OF ABBAN'S FLIGHT ON MARCH 30 TO AVOID

ARREST BY SOLDIERS ARE STILL FUZZY BUT IT APPEARS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ACCRA 02572 01 OF 02 031710Z

A SOLDIER TIPPED HIM OFF ON IMPENDING ARREST. HE AND TWO SENIOR COLLEAGUES FROM ELECTORAL COMMISSION TOOK REFUGE FIRST IN A NEARBY CHURCH AND THEN (PROBABLY) ON LEGON CAMPUS OF UNIVERSITY OF GHANA. MOVE PUT GOG OFF STRIDE AND AFTER AN APRIL 1 BBC BROADCAST REPORTING ABBAN'S DISAPPEARANCE, IT WAS REDUCED TO ISSUING AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON RADIO ASSURING ABBAN, "WHEREEVER HE MIGHT BE," THAT HE WAS IN NO DANGER AND URGING HIM TO CONTACT COMMISSIONER FOR NRC AFFAIRS BUCKMAN. WHEN HE FAILED TO RISE TO BAIT, GOG ISSUED A SECOND STATEMENT SAME DAY RELIEVING HIM OF HIS POST AND APPOINTING ASSISTANT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER A.M. QUAYE IN HIS STEAD. QUAYE, AND ACTIVIST IN NKRUMAH'S REGIME, WAS APPOINTED TO ELECTORAL COMMISSION BY ACHEAMPONG IN EARLY 1978 AND IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO BE IN ACHEAMPONG'S POCKET. HE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY CERTIFY RESULTS SHOWING UNION GOVERNMENT VICTORY IN REFERENDUM.

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 02572 02 OF 02 031721Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ACCRA 2572

5. ON APRIL 2, ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES, REPRESENTING ENGINEERS, DOCTORS, LAWYERS, AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN GHANA, ADOPTED A RESOLUTION ATTACKING ACHEAMPONG'S HANDLING OF REFERENDUM AND DESCRIBING GOG'S CLAIM OF A UNION GOVERNMENT VICTORY AS "BOGUS AND FRAUDULENT." PROFESSIONALS DEMANDED ACHEAMPONG AND SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) RESIGN AND HAND OVER POWER TO A COUNCIL OF STATE HEADED BY CHIEF JUSTICE F.K. APALOO. COUNCIL WOULD HAVE BROAD REPRESENTATION--CHIEFS, CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS AND MUSLIMS, WOMEN, TRADE UNIONS, BUSINESSMEN, ARMED FORCES, POLICE AND GHANA BAR ASSOCIATION WOULD ALL SEND MEMBERS. FINALLY, PROFESSIONALS WANT TO SEE GHANA RETURNED TO CIVILIAN RULE BY END OF THIS YEAR.

6. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AT APRIL 3 MEETING OF GHANA BAR ASSOCIATION, PROFESSIONALS SAID THEY WOULD GO ON STRIKE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. IF THEY DO AND IF
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PAGE 02 ACCRA 02572 02 OF 02 031721Z

STRIKES ARE IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY, SHORTAGES OF ELECTRICITY, WATER, GASOLINE, LUBRICANTS AND MEDICAL SERVICES ARE LIKELY. AS OF AFTERNOON, APRIL 3, HOWEVER,

NO NEW WORK STOPPAGES WERE EVIDENT (NURSES REMAIN OUT ON STRIKE).

7. COMMENT: BOTH SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS OF UNION GOVERNMENT SEEM CONVINCED THEIR SIDE WONE THE REFERENDUM IF VOTES ARE COUNTED "CORRECTLY." OUT OF A CONFUSING WELTER OF CLAIMS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS, ALL THAT EMERGES WITH CERTAINTY AT THIS TIME IS THAT THE REFERENDUM SPLIT THE ELECTORATE BADLY AND HAS HELPED DIVIDE, RATHER THAN UNIFY, THE COUNTRY. WE LACK DATA ON WHICH TO DECIDE WHETHER EIGHER GOG OR PMFJ RIGGED REFERENDUM, AND TO WHAT DEGREE, BUT IN THIS CASE BURDEN OF PROOF WOULD SEEM TO REST WITH GOG, GIVEN ABBAN'S DISAPPEARANCE AND QUESTIONABLE "YES" RETURNS FROM NUMEROUS CONSTITUENCIES WIDELY THOUGHT TO BE AGAINST UNION GOVERNMENT. WE SPECULATE THAT, FACED BY AN UNEXPECTED WAVE OF "NO" VOTES WHEN RETURNS STARTED COMING IN, SMC MAY HAVE PANICKED AND INTERVENED TO MAKE SURE "YES" VOTES CARRIED THE DAY. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE YET AVAILABLE ON THIS POINT.

8. IF PROFESSIONALS DO MOUNT AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE STRIKES, WE MAY SEE A REPEAT OF JUNE-JULY 1977 SCENARIO, IN WHICH SIMILAR STRIKES BY PROFESSIONALS NEARLY PARALYZED GHANA AND CAME CLOSE TO TOPPLING ACHEAMPONG. IN THE END, STRIKES FAILED BECAUSE PROFESSIONS WERE DISORGANIZED, LACKED PUBLIC SUPPORT, FEARED USE OF FORCE AGAINST THEM BY GOG, AND WERE OUT-MANEUVERED POLITICALLY BY A WILY ACHEAMPONG. THESE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ACCRA 02572 02 OF 02 031721Z

WEAKNESSES WILL PROBABLY STILL HANDICAP PROFESSIONALS IF THEY SQUARE OFF FOR ANOTHER ROUND AGAINST HEAD OF STATE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY CLEARLY FEEL ACHEAMPONG HAS CHEATED THEM OF FRUITS OF REFERENDUM VICTORY AND MAY THUS SHOW MORE PERSERVERANCE IN THIS BOUT.

9. SEPTTEL WILL ANALYZE REFERENDUM RESULTS WHEN OFFICIAL FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE. SMITH

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